

## LEYTONSTONE < WANSTEAD & DISTRICT PHILATELIC SOCIETY

Dear Members,

The festive season is over and the New Year begun, so it is a good time to look back over the past year. It was a good start but oh how quickly everything changed!

In early March, I had a day off and attended the Sudbury Society's auction where I purchased a used Edward £1 Green, and before catching the last train home, said farewell and promised to visit in 2021. Whether that will come to fruition, I don't know. I certainly hope so, such was the hearty welcome I had.

Two days after the above, we were plunged into lockdown. Like me, I hope all of you have managed to keep healthy and fit as possible.

Although I had time, the expected thorough cataloguing and sorting of the collection did not happen, but some progress has been made.

I am an avid collector of anything that arouses nostalgia, so when two of my favourite characters from British literature were honoured with a stamp issue, they became a "must have".

Now, I have not bought British stamps from a philatelic counter for twenty years or more so what a shock I had! On the first day of issue, my local post office didn't know that there was an issue out, and they don't get them anyway! A lady in the main post office checked in the safe but couldn't find anything. So I thought, don't waste time, go to the post office by Trafalgar Square.

Well, after asking a traffic warden, I discovered that the St Martin's post office is now a Costa Coffee House; not a stamp in sight and the post office is just past Stanley Gibbons in the Strand!

The only clue to the new post office was a sign on the wall, the actual post office is in the basement of a Robert Dyas hardware shop. Here I am told, that apart from a few 2<sup>nd</sup> class, all stamps went on the First Day of Issue, most being bought by a lady. I was directed to the new philatelic counter in St James. Minimum of luck here, just a stamp or two, the bulk having been bought by the mysterious "lady"; but I was directed to a main post office in Lupus Street.

On the way, I asked directions, again from a traffic warden, who told me that a small local post office lay en route, in a side turning and at the rear of a newsagent's, that may have been missed by the "Rupert Bear fiend". The proprietor didn't have a clue as to why I wanted a particular stamp!

I arrived at the Lupus Street post office, just squeezing in as they closed the front door. The lady behind the counter thought that there were some Rupert Bear stamps in the safe but, as it had just been locked (and it was a time lock), it could not be opened before 9.00am the following morning. She said that if I gave her a contact number, she would ring me in the morning and tell me what she could find.

She duly rang me at 9.15am the following day, and she could almost certainly furnish me with all the stamps that I required. I was there within the hour; obtained the items and thanked her profusely, and said I would commend her diligence to the Leytonstone Wanstead & District Philatelic Society!

I hope you all had a happy Christmas and let's hope that it's not too long before we are all together again under much happier circumstances.

Richard Wood

(LWDPS Secretary)